



From the Desk of NASCOE President Kayla Mattson

Date: October 20, 2025

To: All Members and FSA Employees

As we endure the 20th day of the government shutdown, NASCOE leadership wants to provide an update on the current situation in Congress, how federal operations continue to be affected, and the steps NASCOE is taking to support members during this time. We recognize the uncertainty this situation brings for employees and their families, and we remain dedicated to providing clear, timely, and accurate updates.

Congressional Actions

The Senate reconvened this afternoon to vote for the 11th time on advancing the House passed bill to fund the government and end the ongoing shutdown. So far, every vote has fallen short of the 60 votes needed to advance, and there are no signs that this dynamic has changed. The vote is scheduled to begin at approximately 5:30 PM Eastern Time. If you are interested in observing the live actions of the Senate Floor Proceedings, please visit www.senate.gov and click on *Watch Live Senate Floor Proceedings* to find the Live Floor Webcast.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune is expected to bring up a bill this week to pay federal employees and military service members. Advancing this legislation will require bipartisan support, following last week's failure to move forward with a long-term appropriations bill for the Department of Defense.

The House remains out of session, and they have not voted since September 19th. Speaker Mike Johnson has stated that he will reconvene the House if the Senate advances legislation to pay federal workers and members of the military. He must give 48 hours' notice to allow members to reconvene.

Speaker Johnson was scheduled to meet with the President today and Senate Republicans are expected to be meeting for a luncheon with the President tomorrow.

NASCOE Reminders

Members are reminded to review the furlough documentation received with your official notification — these materials include valuable resources, FAQs, and guidance.

We are entering the second week of some employees reporting to the office for limited duties as outlined in their notification of status change from DAFO. This notification does not define all specific requirements; therefore, all employees should follow their individual state's guidance on when and how often to report. We recognize that comparing state-level differences can cause confusion or frustration. Please avoid unnecessary stress and trust that each state's leadership is following DAFO guidance and applying it appropriately based on their office structures, loan portfolios, and unique needs of their individual state. Follow your state's direction and seek clarification from leadership as needed.

NASCOE remains dedicated to monitoring developments, sharing updates, and supporting our members.

- Daily updates are posted in the NASCOE App, which is available exclusively to members.
- We appreciate members' questions, which help us keep messaging relevant and timely.

- For non-members, please encourage coworkers to join NASCOE by submitting an FSA-444 directly to NASCOE during the shutdown. A generic membership form and FSA-444 are available on the Furlough Page, which continues to be updated with helpful resources.
- Our team continues to hold meetings – areas, committees, workgroups
- Dedicated work is continuing focusing on building/engaging membership, increasing communications, and work on succession planning for the future – developing leaders, providing tools and resources, and improving functions of NASCOE

Unemployment Filing Challenges

NASCOE is unable to offer specific guidance on applying for unemployment benefits, as the process and requirements differ by state.

We are aware of several reports:

- Some employees have been deemed ineligible due to misclassification as “terminated.”
- Others have been denied benefits because employment verification from USDA, NFC, or FSA has not yet been processed due to limited staffing.

If you encounter issues, please ensure your state association leadership is informed so they can communicate with your SED, DSED, AO, or EO. The more information shared with your State Office, the faster problems can be addressed and resolved.

Final Thoughts

If you’re thinking, “There’s nothing new here,” you’re right — not much has changed:

- The government remains shut down.
- Congress has yet to pass Appropriations/Budget or Continuing Resolution.
- Work in our offices has been paused.
- Deadlines are passing, and producers are not receiving the services they need.
- When we return, we will have significant work to catch up on — including potential new program rollouts and disaster assistance.

While we cannot control these external factors, we can control our responses and how we use this time:

- Manage stress and avoid dwelling on uncertainty
- Take care of yourself — physically, mentally, and emotionally
- Spend time with loved ones, friends, and extended family members
- Read a new book
- Try new recipes
- Catch up on appointments
- Find small daily wins and moments of gratitude

Today is a new day. Even if circumstances remain unchanged, choose to make the most of it. Celebrate what you can control — your attitude, your actions, and your well-being. We will return to the offices, resume our mission, and support the farmers and ranchers who depend on us. Until then, take pride in how you navigate this challenging time and recognize your personal accomplishments along the way.

Kayla